

## October ... .. Simplify

One way to make your life easier is to Simplify it. Organizing your space makes it easier to find what you need. Organizing your time gives you a chance to do what you want to do—not just what is demanded of you by others. Try some of the tips on these pages for simplifying your space and time—you'll be glad that you did.



### Ways to Simplify Your Life

**Embrace your insignificance.** Stop thinking that everything depends on you. Let people do for themselves, or better yet let them do for you once in a while.

**Let go.** Release any extra meetings, committees, or anything else that you do not enjoy. Let someone else step up.

**Keep an old blanket in the car trunk.** You will need it when you decide to stop and smell the roses.

**Practice gratitude.** Be happy, and thankful, for each moment. It will force you to slow down.

**Express yourself.** Write, paint, bake, grow something—do something that allows you to express who you are, separate from everyone else.

**Learn to live with less information.** Watch less TV news and cancel half of your magazine subscriptions.

**Live on half of what you earn and save the other half.** This will limit what you do—if you cannot afford it, you cannot do it.

**Stop spending time to save money.** Spending half an hour driving across town to get 50¢ off of something is spending time to save money.

**Cut back on your children's activities.** Kids need activities, but you cannot and should not spend all of your time running kids to practices, etc.

**Make a plan for the weekend that doesn't involve work.** Do something fun, as a family, or by yourself. Everyone deserves a break.

## How to Respect Your Time

- ~ Do one or two things and do them well.
- ~ Don't think it has to be all or nothing—volunteer to do tasks, not take on projects.
- ~ Barter. If someone asks you to do something, ask them to do something for you in return.
- ~ Say No. If you aren't interested in a project, simply say no. You don't need an excuse.
- ~ Do only things you truly want to do.
- ~ Write a To Do list and stick to it.
- ~ Write a Not To Do list and stick to it.
- ~ Take an hour for yourself.
- ~ Get enough sleep.
- ~ Eliminate interruptions.
- ~ Define your hours. Decide what you need to work on each day and how much time you want to spend on it, then stick to it.
- ~ Avoid overscheduling and don't underestimate the time it takes for chores and errands.
- ~ Be prepared for little disasters.
- ~ Sort mail into four piles as soon as it arrives: trash, bills, filing, and magazines.

Sources:  
[www.ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com)  
[www.fastcompany.com/online](http://www.fastcompany.com/online)  
[www.getorganizednow.com](http://www.getorganizednow.com)

## Decluttering Your Space

Getting rid of stuff you don't need or want or use is a great way to make your life easier. Think about how you feel when you walk into a place that is stuffed full of, well, stuff. Now think about how you feel when you walk into a place that is tidy and clutter-free. It's chaos and calm, isn't it? Bring in a little calm to replace the chaos by trying some of these tips.

- 1. Take it one step at a time.** Don't try to do it all in one day—pick a room or a closet and get it thoroughly organized, then move onto another one.
- 2. Cupboards.** Go through your kitchen cupboards, and throw out or give away extra plastic containers, dishes, and appliances. Throw away old spices and herbs. While you're there, paint the inside of the cupboards white or another light color—it'll make finding things inside easier.
- 3. Bookcases.** Go through your books and give away any that do not look interesting to you. Clear the clutter off of bookcases while you're there.
- 4. Bathroom.** Get rid of anything that has changed color, softened, hardened, or stopped smelling good.
- 5. Under the bed.** Think about it—would you really store things under the bed that you want or need? The only thing that should be under there is the floor.
- 6. Linen closet.** Clear out old sheets, blankets, and towels. Put a couple of towels and an old blanket in the trunk of the car, and donate the rest.
- 7. Bedroom closets.** Use the old rule: if you haven't worn it in a year, toss it.
- 8. Kids' room.** Go through toys, clothes, and games and get rid of anything they are no longer interested in.
- 9. Put everything in its place.** Once an area is organized, keep it that way.
- 10. Only add stuff if you get rid of stuff.** If your child wants a new toy, have her choose one (or two or three) to donate to charity. If you buy a new jacket, donate an old one.
- 11. Turn on your favorite music.** Use music to keep you motivated while you're cleaning.
- 12. Make it a game.** Let the kids have a contest to see who can pick up the most toys in 10 minutes.

## Goals for this month



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For Others: \_\_\_\_\_

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How I will Simplify: \_\_\_\_\_

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## October 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				



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## Notes

## October 2006

How I feel about the last month...

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Things I want to remember about last month...

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Things I want to think about...

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## October Observances

\* Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.

\*\* Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date.

1	Navaratri ends **	
2	Dasera **	
	Yom Kippur *	
4	St Francis Day	
	Blessing of the Animals	
5	Ramadan begins (through November 4)	
7-13	Sukkot *	
9	Columbus Day	
14	Shemini Atzeret *	
15	Simchat Torah *	
18	St. Luke, Apostle & Evangelist	
20	Birth of the B'ab	
	Laylat el qadr	
	Quds Day	
	Jummatul Wida	
	Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth	
21	Diwali (Deepavali) **	
	National Mammography Day	
24	Eid al Fitr	
	United Nations Day	
26	National Day of Action	
28	Milvian Bridge Day	
29	Daylight Savings Time Ends	
31	All Hallows Eve	
	Reformation Day	
	Samhain	
	Deep Diwali	Breast Cancer Awareness Month
		Domestic Violence Awareness Month
		Lupus Awareness Month
		AIDS Awareness Month

## November ... .. Think

Before birth, you created neurons, which are brain cells that communicate with each other. By the time you were born, you had 100 million neurons in your brain. During infancy, billions of neurons created the vast networks that integrated your nervous system. As you grew, there were times in your life when learning was easier—whether it was language, math, dance, writing, music, sports, or chemistry.



Throughout life, your neural networks reorganize and reinforce themselves in response to new stimuli and learning experiences. A healthy, well-functioning neuron can be linked directly to tens of thousands of other neurons, and each connection is capable of performing 200 calculations per second.

Your brain is a working organ that learns and grows by interacting with the world through perception and action. It is able to continually adapt and rewire itself. The brain is both elastic and plastic. Its elasticity is the power that drives your muscles, giving you strength, balance, flexibility, mobility, and grace. Plasticity is the drive that networks your brain, giving you cognition, memory, fluidity, versatility, and adaptability.

It is important to challenge your brain to learn new and novel tasks, especially things you've never done before. Tai chi, chess, working with Play Doh, and traveling are all good ways to stimulate your brain.

### **Here are some other ways to stimulate your brain...**

~ Get dressed with your eyes closed ~ Eat with your opposite hand ~ Learn to do a handstand ~ Exercise ~ Read anything ~ Try new foods ~ Walk ~ Play Scrabble ~ Visit a museum or art gallery ~ Daydream ~ Learn to juggle ~ Take unusual classes ~ Build ridiculous things with Legos ~ Listen to music you've never heard before ~ Learn how to write backwards ~ Learn about different people and ideas ~ Do crossword puzzles ~ Walk backwards

## Creative Problem Solving

Another way to exercise your brain is to think in new and different ways. Next time you're faced with a problem, try some of these techniques.

- ~ Specify who, what, when, where, why, and how.
- ~ Think "Wouldn't it be nice if..."
- ~ Think "Wouldn't it be awful if..."
- ~ Pick two words from TV, a book, or the radio at random and put them together. Then see what ideas are sparked.
- ~ Write a story about the problem.
- ~ How would a superhero address the problem?
- ~ What would a dog do to address the problem?
- ~ Break the problem into smaller pieces—divide and conquer.
- ~ Turn the problem or issue around. Think about how you would create the problem or situation.

## Other Ways to Take Care of Your Brain

- ~ Exercise
- ~ Think for yourself
- ~ Treat yourself as well as you treat others
- ~ Write
- ~ Figure out what you believe in
- ~ Sleep
- ~ Eat healthy foods
- ~ Get your regular health screenings
- ~ Laugh—make up a joke
- ~ Love somebody
- ~ Take a break
- ~ Simplify your life

### Brain Power

In a Cleveland experiment, participants were able to improve their pinky finger muscle strength by 35% just by spending 5 minutes per day for 12 weeks thinking about exercising it.

Sources:

[www.fi.edu/](http://www.fi.edu/)

Creative Problem Solver's Toolbox. Richard Fobes, 1993.

## Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is a way of using knowledge and intelligence to arrive at the most reasonable position possible. Critical thinking is the kind of thinking that leads to new insights, novel approaches, fresh perspectives, and whole new ways of understanding and conceiving of things. You can use critical thinking to help you make decisions, form opinions, and make choices for you and your family.

You don't have to be a "great intellectual" to think critically. It is a skill that everyone can learn and use well. To get started thinking critically, try using some of these tips next time you need to make a decision or think about someone's opinion.

- ~ Have a sense of curiosity.
- ~ Be interested in finding new solutions.
- ~ Ask questions. What do you know? How do you know it?
- ~ Consider the source. Who told you, or where did you hear it?
- ~ Is there proof?
- ~ Is all of the information correct and relevant?
- ~ Do you need more understanding or information?
- ~ Is the problem oversimplified?
- ~ What are your beliefs, assumptions, and opinions? How do they weigh against the facts?
- ~ What are others saying?
- ~ Think about why someone wants you to believe something.
- ~ Don't confuse "what should be" with "what is."
- ~ Is there any information that is missing?
- ~ Suspend judgment until you have gathered and thought about all of the facts.
- ~ Look for evidence to support your assumptions and beliefs.

## Goals for this month



For Me: \_\_\_\_\_

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For Others: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I want to Think about: \_\_\_\_\_

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# November 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		

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## November 2006

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## Notes

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## November 2006

How I feel about the last month...

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Things I want to remember about last month...

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Things I want to think about...

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## November Observances

\* Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.

\*\* Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date.

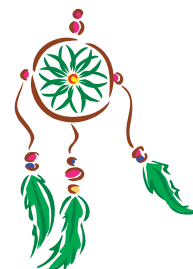
- 1 All Saints' Day
- 2 All Souls' Day
- 5 Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib
- 7 Election Day
- 11 Veterans' Day
- 12 Birth of Baha'u'llah
- 15 Nativity Fast begins - ends Dec. 24
- 23 Thanksgiving
- 24 Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahdur
- 26 Christ the King  
Day of the Covenant
- 28 Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha
- 30 St. Andrew's Day

American Diabetes Month  
Prematurity Awareness Month  
Lung Cancer Awareness Month  
Native American Heritage Month



## December... .. Dream

Everyone needs a Dream. Dreams help us choose courses of action, determine priorities, and focus our energies on the things that are really important in life. By setting goals—dreaming—you can achieve more, improve your performance and productivity, increase your pride in your achievement, improve your self confidence, and have a greater impact on your health and the health of your loved ones. Goals can also help you to say no—or yes—with greater commitment.



Goal setting has been used in the treatment of diabetes and other diseases, rehabilitation programs, physical activity planning, and weight loss and smoking cessation programs, among others. Think about what you want to do in the next month, year, or five years. If you don't have goals already, try these tips to start setting some.

~ **Examine your life.** What do you daydream about? What do you want for yourself? What do you want for loved ones? What is your passion? What bores you?

~ **Think about the what-ifs.** What if you could improve your life in one significant way over the next year? What would that change be—weight loss, eating better?

~ **Write your own obituary.** Think about what you want people to remember you for. If this is too morbid for you, write down what you want people to say about you on your 75th birthday.

~ **Write down your dreams.** Dreams are the imagination at work while you sleep. Try thinking about an issue just before bedtime—you might be surprised at what your brain comes up with when dreaming.

### Why Not Dream Big?

Try letting your imagination run wild - think about what you would wish for if you could have anything in the world. Once you have a Dream, let your imagination work on how to attain it. You might be surprised at what you come up with.

## Make Sure your Dreams are SMART:

**Specific.** Decide what you are going to do, why it is important to do it, and how you will do it. For example, instead of setting a goal to exercise more, set a goal to go for a 30 minute walk 3 mornings a week.

**Measurable.** Make sure that you can measure your progress toward your dream. Measuring your progress helps you stay on track, and helps you stay motivated. For example, instead of setting a goal to lose weight, set a goal to lose 5 pounds in the next month.

**Achievable.** Dreams that are too far out of your reach you probably won't commit to. They need to be set so that you will have to stretch a little to achieve them, but not so far out that you will never get there. For example, instead of setting a goal to give up coffee beginning right now, set a goal to reduce your coffee drinking by one cup every morning for the next month.

**Relevant.** Dream things that are important to you. You don't need to set a goal to learn how to tune up a car if you don't own one.

**Timely.** Set a time frame for achieving your dream. Setting a time limit gives you a target to work toward. For example, instead of setting a goal to stop smoking, set a goal to stop smoking by your next birthday.

Sources:  
[www.uth.tmc.edu](http://www.uth.tmc.edu)  
[www.bmj.bmjournals.com](http://www.bmj.bmjournals.com)

## If You Get Stuck...

~ Believe in yourself. Millions of people reach their goals every day. Why can't you be one of them?

~ Change what isn't working. Be flexible. Be sure to reflect on the progress you have made, and make changes if you are not making progress.

~ Know when to share your goals with others. Share your dream only with those who you feel will be supportive of your goals; otherwise, keep your goals to yourself.

~ Don't procrastinate. Your dreams have maturity dates and dates associated with action steps for a reason. Practice self-discipline.

~ Keep motivated. Motivation comes from within so keep in mind what you are trying to accomplish and why.

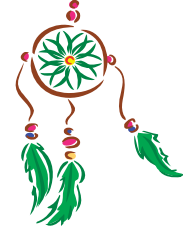
~ Reward yourself. Whenever you reach a goal (or a subgoal), do something nice for yourself. Your commitment and achievement should be celebrated.

## Dreams to Choose From

Following are some dreams other people want to achieve before they die. Try some of these, or try making your own dream list.

Be happy  
Watch the sun set and rise  
Pass on knowledge  
Take pictures  
Tell someone that you love them  
Test drive a Ferrari  
Have a food fight  
Spend a day at a health spa  
Create something  
Experience a holiday in a major city  
Sleep outside  
Know your neighbors  
Visit Harvard University  
Spend a weekend in a small town  
Read a classic novel  
Paint your car's hubcaps green  
Laugh—a lot  
Take photos of your family and friends  
Eat watermelon and spit out the seeds  
Serenade someone  
See the Northern Lights  
Watch a classic movie  
Find an old school friend  
Have a favorite joke  
Go to a concert

## Goals for this month



For Me: \_\_\_\_\_

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For Others: \_\_\_\_\_

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What I Dream about: \_\_\_\_\_

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# December 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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November								January 2007							
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26	27	28	29	30				28	29	30	31				



## December 2006

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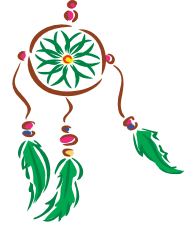


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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## December 2006

How I feel about the last month...



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Things I want to remember about last month...

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Things I want to think about...

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## December Observances

\* Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.

\*\* Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date.

1	World AIDS Day
3,10,17,24	Advent - Sundays of...
8	Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)
	Immaculate Conception of Mary
12	Feast day - Our Lady of Guadalupe
16-24	Hanukkah *
16-25	Posadas Navidenas
21	Yule
	Winter Solstice *
24	Christmas Eve
25	Christmas *
	Feast of the Nativity **
26	Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra)
	St Stephen's Day
26	Kwanzaa begins
28	Holy Innocents
30	Holy Family
	Waqf al Arafa (Hajj Day)
31	Watch Night
	Feast of the Holy Family
	Eid al Adha

Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Stress Free Holiday Month

Safe Toys and Gifts Month